



The Virginia Saltwater Review

Plans and Statistics Department
2600 Washington Avenue, 3rd Floor
Newport News, VA 23607-0756
<http://www.mrc.virginia.gov>

Vol. 23, No. 17
August 28, 2009

by

Department of Plans and Statistics, Fisheries Management Division

OVERVIEW

Now that Bill has moved on, Tropical Storm Danny may soon be interrupting our fishing plans again! Well, tropical weather aside, the billfish action was excellent for the tournaments last weekend with huge numbers of sailfish hook ups. Inshore, cobia action is still hot, and our usual summer friends, croaker and spot, are keeping anglers busy. Large flounder landings have dropped off somewhat, but there are still large fish to be had in the area. Let's all keep an eye on the weather, and enjoy another week of Virginia fishing!

THE FISHING REPORT

Chincoteague

According to Donna at Captain Bob's Marina, flounder has picked up with nice fish coming in from the usual areas including the Chincoteague Channel near Marker 4. Several keeper flounder (22 and 27 inches) were caught off of the pier of Tom's Cove Campground; the Assateague Channel from Toms Cove to the Light House is also a hot spot for flounder. Kingfish are moving into the inlet by Marker 13, and croaker were found on the south side of the Queen's Sound Bridge. Nice 15-inch croaker were also netted in Cockle Creek. A weakfish was caught last week on the east side of Marker 11. Offshore, the Subway Cars were still producing nice flounder and spadefish.

Onancock

Captain Wil, of Onancock, reports little improvement in the fishing. While croaker are numerous, they are still small. Spot have become a little stronger with bloodworms and have been found mostly along the western side of Onancock. No trout. A few keeper flounder (up to 22 inches) have been caught in the area..

Wachapreague

At Captain Zed's Marina, anglers have started catching croaker in the area. Flounder are still around as

well, and a 7-pound, 1-ounce, 25-inch citation flounder was brought in last week. Other citations include a white marlin citation at the Washington Canyon.

Cape Charles

According to staff at Chris' Bait and Tackle, it has been a slower week for fishing. Anglers found flounder near the Cell and Buoy 42, and while croaker action was slower last week, some fish were landed near Oyster and the Concrete Ships. Also, a few cobia were weighed in from the Buoy 16 area.

Ernie of Cherrystone Bait and Tackle reported little activity for the week with few large fish coming in.

Captain Ray Cardone, of Cherrystone, reported nice catches of croaker and a 48-inch red drum release citation. Overall, the flounder were slow last week.

Lower Bay/Bridge Tunnel

Several citations were reported from Cobb's Marina this week. A 57-pound, 8-ounce cobia was caught at the Baltimore Channel, and a 4-pound, 7-ounce triggerfish was caught at the high rise of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Anglers are still catching flounder and cobia around the local islands, and some croaker and spot were also reported.

At the Sunset Boating Center, flounder and croaker were reported. There was less activity this week because few anglers went out over the weekend.

Cobia continue to be hot at the York Spit, according to staff at the York River Fishing Center, and a 59.5-pound, 59-inch cobia was landed from the Stove Pipe last week. Spanish mackerel were found off of New Point, and spot and croaker were reported from the Gloucester Pier.

Ken Neill, of the Peninsula Anglers Club and IGFA representative, contributed the following:

Cobia fishing is still not showing any signs of slowing down. Chumming and sight-casting are both producing fish. Spanish mackerel are on fire inside the bay and along the ocean front. Mixed in with the Spanish are plenty of bluefish. Flounder fishing remains very good along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and have turned on at 36A, the Cell, and around Back River Reef. Some large sheepshead, triggerfish, and spadefish are available along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Spadefish are also over the Tower Reef, the Santore, the Tiger Wreck, and other nearby structures. As they have been all summer, amberjack are extremely plentiful and aggressive at the South Tower. Offshore, billfish action is very good. Most fish are being caught between 30 and 100 fathoms. A few yellowfin tuna, dolphin to over 50 pounds, and some wahoo are also available. What has been especially impressive is the large number of sailfish flags that have been flying from the riggers of the Virginia fleets.

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA International Representative for Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

Yet another tropical disturbance threatens fishing continuity along the mid-Atlantic coast. Danny could make this weekend a wash for anglers, but the late summer fishing trend should pick up again

after the weather clears. Right now, many summer species are preparing to migrate out of the area, while the fall residents are making their debut. This can make it tough to choose which fish to target. Most are choosing cobia and flounder as they both group in the lower bay, making easy targets.

Cobia is a sure deal as they crowd along bridge pilings and lower bay buoys, with more fish now reported in open water. Pods of fish are appearing on the surface as they prepare to exit bay waters. Reports indicate good numbers of cruising fish outside Little Creek Inlet, along the entire Baltimore Channel, and near York Spit. Chummers and bottom anglers are still catching decent fish in the usual hot spots with cut bunker.

Flounder action is up and down lately, but any rain and wind from Danny could push the action to the downside. On good days, anglers are finding enough keepers to hold their interest. Nice flatfish are coming from deeper channels and lower bay structures. The High Rise, the bend at the 3rd Island, the 1st Island, and Back River Reef are the popular flounder spots lately. Both live bait and stripped bait are working well. The lower bay inlets are also giving up some keeper fish, with many ranging up to 22 inches in both Lynnhaven and Rudee inlets. If you prefer not to fight the crowds, decent flatfish will begin showing on inshore and offshore wrecks soon. Nice keeper-sized black sea bass are also providing good action on many offshore structures.

Bull reds are still roaming the lower bay shoals, as well as the 3rd and 4th islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Surf anglers are also pulling big bulls out of the surf along Smith Island.

Decent spot are showing in Lynnhaven and Rudee inlet and scattered around the lower bay. This action should only improve over the next few weeks. Croaker ranging up to 2 pounds are hitting near the four islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, off the concrete ships, and the near the Cell.

Puppy drum (juvenile red drum) are still active in the shallows. The best locations are Lynnhaven and Rudee inlets, with speckled trout also showing promise on the Poquoson Flats and Hungar's Creek. Backwater casters are reporting nice sized pups on live bait, Gulp Swimming Mulletts, and cut bait.

Trigger fish are gaining even more momentum, while diehard sheepshead anglers are sneaking by with scattered catches up to 12 pounds this week. Both triggers and sheepshead are hitting fiddlers dangled along the structure of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Spadefish are also lingering in these same areas.

The king mackerel bite is still not what it has been over the last few years. But September and October are often good months for kings, so anglers are still hopeful. Nice-sized Spanish mackerel are providing good action from the middle bay on out to the Chesapeake Light Tower. A few anglers are encountering gaffer mahi pushing 20 pounds along the CB buoy line and the Tower Reef areas lately.

According to Chris' Bait and Tackle, tarpon action is still non-existent this week. Tarpon experts fear that more inclement weather could mark the end of this year's already bleak silver king run.

Virginia deep droppers are still faring very well off Virginia. The Rudee inlet headboats continue to bring home content anglers toting limits of big tilefish, rosefish, and grouper. Several citation blues over 10 pounds are in the mix.

Amberjack are still available at the South Tower and offshore wrecks, and crevalle jack will show on the Light Tower within the next few weeks.

Offshore, billfish are still at the top of the list, with scattered wahoo, and bailer, and gaffer dolphin good consolation prizes. Sailfish in particular have been congregating from southeast of the Cigar to the 800 line in around 20 to 100 fathoms. Swordfish will become more common as waters cool.

Virginia Middle Bay

Roger, with Jett's Hardware, reports that even with the high water temperatures, the fishing continues to be good. There are plenty of Spanish mackerel around Windmill Point and Gwynn's Island. Small bluefish are also in the mix. A few flounder are still around in their usual haunts. Croaker and spot are biting, but are on the small side.

Dan, with Smith's Point Marina, reports the Spanish mackerel bite has been excellent. Flounder can be found in the mouth of the Potomac River. Striped bass are being caught on the Maryland side of the state line in the 18- to 28-inch range. A few small croaker and spot are being caught as well. The large red drum in the area continue to surprise a few lucky anglers with some citation-sized fish being caught.

Tommy, with Garrett's Marina, says there are small croaker and spot in the rivers. While the spot are small now, they should start getting larger soon.

Jerry Thrash, of Queen's Creek Outfitters, reported the following:

Cobia were still biting very well this week at York Spit, Bluefish Rock, and Silver Beach, and they have also been active just south of New Point Light. Whole menhaden or menhaden chum combined with live croaker or eels are the baits of choice. One cobia release citation was reported this week. Spanish mackerel fishing continues to be good around Windmill Point, and the creeks and rivers continue to produce keeper spot and croaker. Spot are available off Gwynn's Island, at the Spike (3R), and up the Rappahannock River around Buoy 8. Large croaker are schooling in the open bay to leave the area.

Flounder fishing has improved somewhat at Buoy 42 and the Cell area. A neighbor had 2 keeper flounder and several throwbacks drifting down-tide at the Spike. One citation-sized flounder was caught near Gwynn's Island while jigging. Speckled trout and puppy drum fishing have slowed.

Virginia Beach

According to staff at the Virginia Beach Fishing Center, inshore fishing is really great with taylor bluefish and shark (mostly catch-and-release black tip and spinner shark). There has also been numerous nice-sized cobia. The smaller ones were around 30 pounds, and the larger cobia have been over 60 pounds.

Offshore fishing was doing really well with amberjack last week. There were numerous release citations. The billfish fishing has been fantastic. During the first day of the annual billfish tournament, over 100 citations were reported. Most of these were sailfish, with a few scattered white marlin. Only one blue marlin was seen over the past week. There were also scattered tuna and dolphin, but as the weather begins to cool, staff expects to see more.

Paula from Fisherman's Wharf Marina reported numerous sailfish caught in last week's tournament. Out of 194 billfish reported, 160 were sailfish. A few dolphin and white marlin were also caught, but there were only a few blue marlin. Most of the catchers were in southern waters, south of the Triple Os.

Virginia Piers

At the Ocean View Fishing Pier, numerous spot, nice croaker, and the occasional flounder were reported.

Staff at the Lynnhaven Fishing Pier reported catches of spot, croaker, sea mullet, and blue crabs this week.

It was a good fishing week at the Virginia Beach Pier, and numerous spot and sea mullet were reported.

At the Little Island Fishing Pier, staff reported that fishing was slow overall last week. There have been catches of spot, sea mullet, and a few bluefish.

At the Buckroe Fishing Pier, anglers caught spot, bluefish, spadefish, black sea bass, and small flounder.

Outer Banks, NC

Offshore fishing out of Nags Head was hampered by Hurricane Bill last week. Dolphin, wahoo, amberjack, king mackerel, yellowfin tuna, and blackfin tuna should still be around though. Billfish bites were still good when boats were able to go out. Fishing in the 12-mile range produced streaky action with king mackerel, large red drum, and black drum. Artificial reefs proved to be consistent in their ability to turn out black sea bass, tautog, sheepshead, and spadefish. Nearshore action was limited to Spanish mackerel. Pier fishing and surf fishing produced good action for spot, croaker, and sea mullet. Inshore, anglers saw decent action on flounder and sea trout, with sheepshead and black drum around the bridges.

South of Oregon Inlet, fishing was good when the swells were not too large. Puppy drum and bluefish were working the Point, with a lot anglers using cut bait. Shrimp and bloodworms were working for those looking for spot all along the beaches. Good-sized pompano were seen around Ramp 43.

Offshore fishing out of Hatteras also had issues with Hurricane Bill. A strong dolphin bite was seen a day or two after Bill passed by, along with wahoo and blackfin tuna. Inshore fishing was good for Spanish mackerel and bluefish. The speckled trout and red drum bite slowed down in the sound.

If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at (757) 247-2237. Please credit the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's THE SALTWATER REVIEW as the source of the fishing information.











ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION

***WANTS YOUR FISH....
TO MEASURE AND AGE.***

*You catch it, you fillet it,
but instead of throwing the remains in the trash,
please donate them to science.*

The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:

COBIA	SHEEPSHEAD	RED DRUM	BLACK DRUM	TAUTOG
				
KING MACKEREL	SPANISH MACKEREL	TILEFISH (BLUELINE OR GOLDEN)	WRECKFISH, SNOWY GROUPER, WARSAW GROUPER	BLUEFISH (GREATER THAN 16 POUNDS OR 36 INCHES)
				

**In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a
ONE FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT or HAT, FOR EACH PARTICIPANT,
PER MONTH of the DONATION.**

Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:

**Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)
Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach)
Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton)
Buckroe Fishing Pier (Hampton)**



ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

Get Hooked!
Report at
www.vasaltwaterjournal.com

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission wants to know about the saltwater fish you caught and if you threw it back or took it home for dinner. How big was it? What species was it? Where did you catch it? This self-reported catch-and-release information will be posted on-line, giving the recreational angler a broader picture of what everyone else is catching -- and where.



The Fisherman's Journal is a tool intended to benefit the individual angler, the fishing community, and fishery managers. It allows individual anglers to keep an easy-to-retrieve record of their successful fishing experiences. It allows the fishing community to share and learn about other anglers' experiences. Finally, it benefits fishery managers by allowing them to assess fish populations by analyzing data provided by you, the recreational fisherman.

You will be able to report catch-and-release ranges, in addition to individual fish kept or released.

On those days that you catch-and-release 50 bluefish, you can just report the number caught and a range of lengths. Reporting individual measurements on more highly prized species -- such as Red Drum, Striped Bass and Flounder -- provides a greater benefit for everyone.

Anglers also may report their fishing trip information, including general location, time of day, weather and water conditions and

type of gear and bait used. This information could be extremely valuable to other anglers to give them an idea of what is caught, where it is caught, and what bait is working on what species.

This self-reporting program will help anglers to become more successful and will provide fishery managers with important anecdotal information on recreational catches. The voluntary on-line reporting system is called the "Saltwater Fisherman's Journal," and is found at www.vasaltwaterjournal.com.

Virginia Marine Resources Commission
Recreational Fishing Online Reporting





Recreational Saltwater Fishing
Welcome Jgrist,

Red Drum Reports are Needed!

We are collecting length data from red drum that anglers catch-and-release. In 2009, there will be a coastwide (Virginia to Florida) stock assessment of the red drum population, and information is lacking on the catch-and-release of red drum outside of the management slot limit (18 to 26 inches).

New 2008 Tautog Regs

Closed Season	May 1 through June 24
Minimum Size Limit	14 inches
Possession Limit	4 per person

June 16, 2008

Members: 1,457
Trips: 295
Catches: 3,941

Introducing the Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program!

- Please help keep our waterways cleaner and safer for:
 - fish
 - birds
 - marine mammals
 - boaters and swimmers
- Deposit used or tangled monofilament fishing line into specially marked containers!



VMRC-Managed

Locations!*

Ocean View Fishing Pier, Norfolk
Long Bay Pointe Marina, Virginia Beach
Buckroe Fishing Pier, Hampton
Chris' Bait and Tackle, Cape Charles
Capt. Bob's Marina, Chincoteague
Wallace's Bait and Tackle, Hampton
Don's Bait and Tackle, Wachapreague



***DGIF manages other locations throughout Virginia**

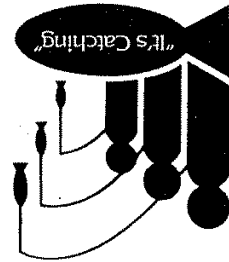
The Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program is run jointly by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries with support from the Boat US Foundation.

If you have any questions about the program, or suggestions for new container locations, please contact Alicia Nelson at (757) 247-2244 or email alicia.nelson@mrc.virginia.gov.



FIRST CLASS MAIL

TAKE A FRIEND FISHING



FISHERIES PLANS/STATISTICS OFFICE
VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION
2600 WASHINGTON AVE., 3RD FLOOR
NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA 23607

Practice

CAREFUL CATCH

REDUCE STRESS FACTORS THAT KILL FISH

Exhaustion * Loss of Slime * Wounds * Time out of Water